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Religious Miscellany.

CONVERSION OF A KAREN WOMAN TO CHRISTIANITY.

BY MARY E. HERBERT.

Beside the Salween river,
I took my lonely stand,
Watching with curious, wistful eyes,
A ship approaching land.
Nearer it drew, and from it
A stranger stepped on shore,
A form so gracious, face so good,
I never viewed before.

In accents sweet and gentle,
He straight accosted me,
And said, "where'er thou goest,
May peace abide with thee."
Then with a kindly gesture,
He clasped my willing hand,
And soon again within the ship,
I saw him sail from land.

With spirit sadly yearning,
I marked him pass away,
Then hastening, told my kindred,
"An angel came to-day."
I told them of his greeting,
How kind his words to me,
"As I had been a man," he spoke,
"An angel he must be!"

They listened, hardly scowling,
Then from my husband fell
Fierce taunts and cruel scourgings,
That I such taunt should tell.
And sternly spake he to me,
"For festal rites prepare,
Hasten to Gudama's shrine,
And choicest offerings bear."

Then changed my spirit in me—
I would no longer bow,
With flashing eyes, undimmed mien,
I made this solemn vow,
"No more to Gudama
An offering will I bring,
For twenty years I've worshipped him,
A vile and worthless thing.

Yet never came there answer,
My broken heart to cheer;
"Why should he, my husband, thus
To God me to despair?
But taunts and blows are useless,
For, hear me, from this day
The God that made that white man good,
To Him alone I'll pray."

Then five long years I waited,
And sadly sent forth cry,
"O! Father God, O! Righteous One,
O! Just Lord, make me reply.
Wherever be the dwelling,
On land or in the sea,
In the mountains, in the heavens,
Have pity upon me."

And lo! in gracious answer,
Another stranger came;
I at his feet gladly down,
And heard of Jesus' name.
Oh, precious, precious tidings!
The white man's God is mine;
And for the love He showed for me,
I all things would resign.

No more to Gudama
My kindred homage pay,
But, bowing to Jehovah,
They own his sovereign sway.
By Christ, our Lord, united,
The heavenly race we run,
Still working till our Master,
Shall say to each, "Well done!"

Dartmouth, May 25.
The above narrative inserted in verse by the writer, was related to the wife of a Methodist missionary in Burmah, by a Karen woman, who has been the instrument of the conversion of her husband and family, and of raising three churches, a wonderful example of the saving power of the glorious Gospel.

THE LESSON OF A LIFE.

The biographical department of Wesleyan literature in Great Britain has recently received a rich accession in the life of the Rev. Thomas Collins, written by the Rev. Samuel Coley. Mr. Collins was born in Warwickshire, in 1810. His parents were persons of strong individuality, utterly unconventional, of great faith, and indomitable in their attachment to Methodism. The father was a class-leader, and all members of his family were made members of his class when they had attained the age of seven. From the beginning of their seventh year Mr. Collins paid a penny a week for each of his children into the ministerial fund, but ceased to do the same as each became able, of his own earnings, to do it. He was in the habit occasionally, of criticising the Church, but it was only the criticism of a loving heart, and "Methodism," said he once, "has done much and will be done more, but only little and inadequately by nature. Our members are too unreluctant—too little attached to their mother, and all because they know so little of her worth."

In 1818, when young Collins was just entering his ninth year, Gideon Ouseley, the famous Irish missionary, visited the neighbourhood of his father, and preached. His word was "God with Divine power." The heavenly messenger went with his father to church, and his heart broke utter. The public service closed, but he would not leave. Touched by such inexpressible sorrow, Ouseley himself led the boy into the house of a neighbouring minister, with whom and the father the holy man continued in prayer until the tears of the weeping child were wiped away, and he received, in the most inimitable manner, the Spirit of adoption.

Glad memory of that hour never failed. Warm gratitude to the instrument of good never grew cold. A portrait of Ouseley was always treasured one of the few adornments of the young man's first room. In his seventeenth year in a large room of a private house at Stratford-on-Avon, to reach which place he walked fifteen miles, and walked back the same evening after the sermon. At a prayer-meeting, March 5, 1830, his spirit, which for some time had been

stirred with a desire after holiness, was enabled to believe the cleansing Word; and, in the strength of that faith, he bowed his whole will utterly to Christ, and to Him surrendered all authority in his soul. The act of devotion was complete. His onward life was a priesthood, and sacrifice a vocation. His sister, during his last illness, remarked to him with joy, upon his last testimony before the Church, of the bliss and duty of perfect love. His reply was, "I got it, I kept it, I have it now, and it is heaven!"

Mr. Collins was admitted into the Wesleyan Conference in 1831, his first appointment being the Wake Mission. His evangelism was primitive—on foot, minus the horse, minus the saddle-bags. Some of his walks were thirty miles in one stretch. In his diary, Oct. 28, 1831, he says, "I have no tears to shed over hard roads, but O, how many and bitter I have over hard hearts! I am resolved, every Sunday morning, on my knees, to renew my covenant with God; the forenoon of each week-day, as far as possible, shall be given to regulated and consecrated study, each afternoon to visitation. I will never, unless compelled, leave any house without prayer. Wherever I am to lodge, I will, if possible, gather all together for united family worship. I will ever faithfully rebuke sin, wherever I see it, and finally I will seek ever to act as one altogether given up to labour for the salvation of the souls of men and the promotion of the work of God."

But, however interesting it might be, we do not propose giving a sketch of his life, but simply to note a characteristic or two of his ministerial character.

He was direct, tender, convincing, as a preacher. He knew how to take advantage of the spirit of the hour. His illustrations, though not numerous, were obtained from the Scriptures, and from his daily observations and reading. Every incident and fact of life he compelled to pay tribute to his ministrations. Preaching from the words in Deut. xxviii., 26-29, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms," he said, "As I sat in the railway carriage, we stopped at Weedon; a soldier's wife, from the barracks there, came in with two young children and an infant at the breast. Novelty, noise and motion much excited the children who were not in arms; the one there busy drawing life from her life, lifted but his eyes to meet her kindly look. The sudden whistle, which warned us of an approaching tunnel, startled him somewhat; but her quick glance of love assured him again, and he sank back to nestle in her embrace. The tunnel was long, and when we emerged, I found that little one asleep. Then in my heart I prayed: 'So, O my Father, may I repose upon Thy bosom and under Thy eye. So as I enter the valley of death, may I fall asleep upon Thy arms, to awake and find myself with Thee in the light of eternity!'"

He was patient, continuous, and successful as a pastor. He felt that three hours per day was the minimum time to be given to the work. And the less my number of members," remarked he to a friend, "the more I must visit." His tact was marvellous. One of his friends play billiards; our friends drink wine; our friends attend the theatre; our friends dance; and in social converse with them we cannot find it in us to condemn what they approve, until ourselves we learn to look with leniency upon these aberrations of our friends.

But more than all, we have come to the habit of taking our views from respectable and moral worldlings. We, as a Church, have a necessity to depend upon what we call friendly "outsiders." They manage our societies; they aid our festivals; they are put on decorative committees; they play the instruments in our churches and sing in our choirs. This cannot be avoided under the circumstances. I do not know that it is best to have it otherwise. We are making the outsiders better, and it were well if they do not make us worse. Standing in these relations it is not strange that our members, especially our younger members, heed their advice. With all respect to these worldly outsiders, I would say that their view of Christian duty, and of the nature of worldly pleasures are not to be relied upon, while the true idea should be to please God. They ask, how can I enjoy myself? While the Christian asks, what indulgences can I take in view of example and of eternity? We can be spiritually minded and join in these worldly amusements which dissipate the mind?

This of worldly influence ought not to be as it is. We do not see the fate of religion if its forms are to be given it by the world? The Church should give views to the world, not look to the world for its views.

But why refrain from sinful amusements? I answer, first, for our soul's sake. Vitiety is a thing more precious than gold or diamonds. We cannot afford to peril our acceptance with God for an hour of earthly dissipation! If I am alone in the wilderness with a light which may go out if I expose it to the breeze, will I not walk with care? If within me is the light of heaven, shall I permit its shining for the vain amusements of a social hour?

In regard to most of these pleasures, the following severe rule is true: If I enjoy religion, I will have little desire to go to them; and I cannot enjoy religion if I go. The attendance upon balls and theatres will destroy religious enjoyment, and attendance upon them is quite sure evidence that the person who goes does not enjoy religion.

But again, we should refrain from these indulgences because of the influence of a permission example. We have found the way of life, and as we go up the mountain of God, there should ever be a space between us and the world as a standing invitation to the world to come up higher. In which shall we most influence the people of the world, by going down to them, or by maintaining an elevated position and calling upon them to come up to us? If the professed Christian young man plays games of chance, goes to dances, laughs among the triflers at the theatre, and indulges in the common frivolities of life, what can he ask of the sinner? The worldly can well answer—"You and I do not differ now; in what can I change?"

The Scriptures clearly declare that we are to come out from the world and be separate. We are not to be conformed to this world, and how

can a true Christian go into halls of pleasure, and still be respected as a Christian? But what is the remedy? Is it not true that we as preachers fail to preach on practical matters, as the fathers did? We preach the "Gospel," but meddle not with political, social, or individual sins. We talk of missions, of the final triumphs of the cross, of the sublimity and influence of Christianity, but we have not "bottle" the pulpit by speaking of the dance, or larger bear, or of games, or shows. These matters border on the personal, and we prefer to talk in the abstract; to take grand views, and go flying in the heavens blowing the trumpet of Gabriel! We take the wings of the Sabbath morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, and soar beyond such minor matters as the sins of the people? The people love to fly with us and argue on. All this is pleasant, but while we fly, sin, social evils, worldliness, come creeping in among the people—Even while we fly, the young people are the most of the coming year, for I am simply your next part. The little foxes spoil the vines. The little, sneaking jacksals destroy the tender plants; but we have no time to look after little foxes; our mission is to hunt the elephants and lions. Worldly life is made up of trifle, of games, of play, of gossip, of petty slanders, of trifles, and should not the Gospel come down among men adjusting life as it is? We may talk in an eloquent way of the future fruitage of Methodism, but unless we do a little pruning now and then, our vintage will grow gorgeous, fruitless vines!

I cannot see why, in this age of looks and music, Methodist people should be under the necessity of resorting to these pleasurable pastimes. Surely a soul alive to God and in union with intellectual joys, need not go aside to the sensual, the intellectual, and the spiritual. Surely our Christianity ought to lift us above the first and lowest platform to the second and the third—North Western Advocate.

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

There are two ways, I apprehend, in which we may advance the cause of temperance. One is, to take possession of the inner life of a man; to bring the motives, the forces of his inner life into conformity with temperance principles; to bring him to love total abstinence, and he is secure; place him where you will, surround him with temptations, put him in circumstances of difficulty where he is to battle with the temptations of life, and he will stand, he will be a hero in the fight under all circumstances, because then he is armed against all temptations from without. But the great mass of men will not be moved by this inner motive power; you must reach them from without, through public opinion; make it dishonorable, disreputable, disgraceful for them to drink, and they will avoid the intoxicating cup. Here, in part, is the work of the temperance man, it is to create a right public spirit, right sentiments in the community. This must be done through the press, through literature, through conversation; it must be done by the example of men in high places and extensive influence.—Senator Patterson.

WEAKNESS AND WICKEDNESS.

Moral weakness, even in a man substantially sound at heart, never fails to be seriously damaging to reputation and usefulness. If it take the direction of trifling and levity, he is suspected of having no serious Christian purpose, and what he calls wit and goodnature, and others call silliness; if it be in the form of censorious back-biting, he is supposed to be malicious, or at least not to have that love for his neighbor which is essential to true religion; if it manifest itself in unscrupulous freedom of speech and in the use of language of lasciviousness, if it run into careless misrepresentation of opponents, and unfounded accusations, it awakens suspicion of deliberate falsehood and slander; if it come to sight in the use of dubious or even measures to promote a good cause, it gains the evil credit of Jesuitism. Thus a man's moral weakness ever damages him more seriously than he imagines; reacting always on inward character and usually on outward reputation and influence. It is surprising, it ought to be alarming, what little things of great and valuable qualities, in despite of this mind, when he said, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary (perfumer) to send forth a stinking vapor: so doth a little folly that is in reputation for wisdom and honor." Alas, that we all are so careless in removing these "dead flies," trusting too much to "ointment" of our reputation! The proportion and strength of the latter are often insufficient to conceal the effect of the former, and the world detects the flies but not the ointment, and ignores our virtues while it condemns us for our follies.—The Advance.

HALF BELIEVERS.

There are many such, and this is every way deplorable. It is to be deplored because half-believers dishonor God. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten and well-beloved Son. There was nothing half-hearted in that. He gave his choicest treasure. He meant to provide eternal redemption for us. He did provide it. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. He cannot, therefore, please him that you should take up with anything less than full salvation, immediate salvation. My dear friend, be not deceived with any representation that full salvation, immediate salvation, is not for such an one as you; that it were modesty in you to be content that you shall be by saved, when you become better than you now are. "This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you, it is of other words, an enemy hath insinuated; it is not God's teaching. He says: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' He says: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." He says that it does this; not that it will do it at some future day. If you do not fully take Him at His word, you are but a half believer. Do not deceive yourself with the

notion that it becomes you, conscious as you are that you are still very sinful, not to assure yourself of being received into full favour. For consider it is not your repentance, nor your obedience, better or worse, that procures the favor, but the atoning sacrifice of Christ. With Christ, and what he has done and suffered, our God is entirely pleased. He tells you so, and warns you not to seek in some improvement, or condition of yourself, that ground of justification which He finds in Christ alone. You are indeed sinful, more sinful than you think; but sinfulness is not exact for delaying for an instant to accept the full forgiveness tendered to the penitent believer. Half belief is deplorable, because it makes a weak, vacillating character. Christ and His Church are calling the strong Christians, whose strength is joy in the Lord. Half belief excludes this joy, and leaves the soul grieved and made ready for an army of doubts and fears, and miserable forbodings.—Congregationalist.

THE WUCHANG MISSION.

From a speech by the Rev. J. Cox, at the Mission to China Breakfast Meeting, London, April 30, 1870.

Mr. Chairman, I must give a brief sketch of our Wuchang mission, and I shall make it as brief as I possibly can. I shall try to talk to you as one of yourselves, for I am simply your neighbor, and I shall try to speak in all freedom and confidence to you. I shall endeavor to take you, perhaps a little behind the scenes of that young mission which is now being faithfully and vigorously prosecuted by my beloved colleagues there in the heart of China. My memory goes back to the first step taken towards that mission; and I owe my first thoughts of that new mission to the suggestion of my friend and present host, Sir Francis Lyvet. It was in conversation with him as to our mission that he expressed an opinion that it would be as well to try some other station in addition to Canton. When I found a layman prepared for an extension of that sort, I directed my thoughts in the same direction, and found that the Secretary had already been thinking of the matter, in consequence of the completion of Lord Elgin's treaty. You will remember, I dare say, that when I was at the China Breakfast nine years ago, my then superintendent, Mr. Piery, wrote to the secretaries, enclosing a certain yellow silk letter, recommending them to tell me off for a period from Canton, to visit the so-called Chinese insurgents, and, if possible, establish myself as a Christian missionary among them. I did not expect much from that mission to the Chinese rebels, but from my conversation with the secretary and members of the committee, I offered to go and do my utmost, on condition that if I failed amongst these rebels some new mission should be undertaken one of the ports recently opened under Lord Elgin's treaty. Shortly before I sailed I dined with Dr. Osborn and Mr. Arthur, also to talk over this new project; we talked it over for a couple of hours very carefully and thoroughly, and at the conclusion of the conversation, Mr. Arthur took me aside and said: "You are sailing in a week, I want to write you a paper of instruction; I may not be able to catch you before you embark, but I will try to do so, you know what we want, and we trust you." And with that commission, Mr. Chairman, I sailed to China. When I reached Canton, and conversed upon this matter in district meeting, Mr. Piery first gave me the idea that I must be told off from Canton permanently for this new mission. I of course had to look carefully at this undertaking, and I do not know whether I could have any suggestion to you a method by which you may immediately touch and strengthen all our operations. I gave myself after the district meeting to a day of fasting and prayer, for these visits home, full of pleasure as they are, and we hope, sometimes not without usefulness, have still their temptations and dangers; and when I went back there I felt as if I did not go to this undertaking with the inward calm strength of the promise, "My presence shall be with thee," and I shall never forget the day when I went into my chamber before I could undertake, and I do not know whether I could have any suggestion to you a method by which you may immediately touch and strengthen all our operations. 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